Claims:

1. A method of operating a wireless communication system comprising:

in a controller, receiving streaming data contention-window slot assignment requests from streaming transmitter units;

in the controller, assigning contention-window slot numbers to the requesting streaming transmitter units;

in the controller, sending an indication of available contention-window slots to other transmitter units; and

in the other transmitter units, using a randomly selected contention-window slot to begin transmitting wherein the randomly selected contention window slot is selected from contention-window slots other than the assigned contention-window slots.

2. The method of Claim 1, wherein the indication of the available contention-window slots is an indication of the first unassigned slot.

3. The method of Claim 2 wherein the randomly selected slot is selected from slots greater than or equal to the first unassigned slot.

4. The method of Claim 1 wherein the streaming data is audio data.

5. The method of Claim 1 wherein the streaming data is video data.

6. The method of Claim 1 wherein the number of assigned contention-window slots is limited.

7. A wireless communication system comprising:

a controller adapted to receive streaming data contention-window slot requests from streaming transmitter units, the controller adapted to assign contention-window time slot numbers to requesting streaming transmitter units and send an indication of available contention-window slots to other transmitter units;

at least one streaming transmitter unit adapted to begin transmitting in a contention-window time slot assigned by the controller; and

at least one other transmitter unit adapted to begin transmitting in a randomly selected contention-window slot, the randomly selected contention-window slot being selected from slots other than the assigned slots, the at least one streaming transmitter unit and at least one other transmitter unit sensing the transmit medium and not beginning to transmit in a contention window if a another unit has begun transmitting.

8. The wireless communication system of Claim 7, wherein the indication of available contention-window slots is an indication of the first unassigned contention-window slot.

9. The wireless communication system of Claim 7 wherein the streaming data transmitted by the streaming transmitter unit comprises audio data.

10. The wireless communication system of Claim 7 wherein the streaming data transmitted by the streaming transmitter unit comprises video data.

11. The wireless communication system of Claim 7 wherein a limited number of assignable contention-window slots are available.

12. A wireless communication system comprising:

a transmitter unit wirelessly transmitting data to a dumb receiver unit;

the dumb receiver unit adapted to receive data from the transmitter unit but not adapted to send an acknowledgment signal to the transmitter unit; and

a surrogate unit adapted to acknowledge the reception of data intended for the dumb receiver unit with a surrogate acknowledgment signal to the transmitter unit.

13. The wireless communication system of Claim 12 wherein there are multiple dumb receiver units for each surrogate unit.

14. The wireless communication system of Claim 12 wherein the dumb receiver unit is unable to transmit data.

15. The wireless communication system of Claim 12 wherein the surrogate unit is a control unit for the system.

16. The wireless communication system of Claim 12 wherein the acknowledgment signal is a medium-access-control acknowledgment signal.

add a1